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ABSTRACT

A study examined the implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) in 12 communities across the country. Despite the impressive numbers cited by those who proclaim that the JTPA is a remarkable success, the program's critics, and even some of its supporters, acknowledge major concerns about the program's ability to address the special needs of women. As women attempt to enter the job market, they are confronted by special problems. They are clustered in the work force in the lowest-paying and most nontechnical occupations, often face discriminatory attitudes by employers, and lack adequate supportive services. Although female participation in JTPA was found to be high (ranging between 46 and 70 percent), female representation on private industry councils was critically low. Nine of the 13 JTPA sites monitored provided money for supportive services; however, only one site used the full 15 percent of the total budget that is permissible under the law. The average hourly wage for program graduates from the sites monitored ($5.30) translated into an annual income of $11,024, which, while above the poverty level, still leaves program graduates in the ranks of the working poor. Furthermore, despite the JTPA's offer of nontraditional training, few women studied were being placed in nontraditional jobs. A list of additional resources concludes the report. (MN)

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

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WOMEN IN JOB TRAINING REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES

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AN LWVEF REPORT ON WOMEN IN JOB TRAINING

Implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act in Selected Communities

With the increasing number of female-headed households, the well-being and even the survival of their families hinges upon women's ability to find jobs. However, lack of education and marketable skills severely hampers the likelihood of many women entering the labor force. Other barriers exist, as well. Low pay for those jobs that are available, limited work history for many women and the lack of affordable child care make it almost impossible for many women to earn a living sufficient to support a family. The result is that 53 percent of all female-headed households live in poverty.

Problems continue for those women who do make it into the labor force. They typically earn much less than men. The words "wage gap" are unfortunately a still familiar phrase. In 1985 it meant that women earned less than two-thirds of what men earned. One significant cause of the wage gap is the continued segregation of the labor force, with women clustered in only a few, typically low-paid, occupations.

Because male and female poverty and unemployment differ in origin, traditional employment training programs that work for men may not work for women, unless their special needs are addressed in both the design and the implementation of programs. Since the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is the major federally funded job training program, it is essential that this program address the special needs of women. The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) has compiled information on the implementation of JTPA in 12 jurisdictions.* Based on the monitoring activities of state and local Leagues, this LWVEF report on JTPA and women is provided for interested citizens and their respective communities.

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*Pasadena, CA; New Britain-Bristol, CT; Macon, GA; Hawaii; Cook County, IL; Michigan; New Hampshire; New York state; Houston, TX; Charlottesville-Albemarle County, VA; Charleston, WV; and Greater Green Bay, WI.

BACKGROUND

During the 1970s, local and state Leagues of Women Voters monitored the implementation of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA), the predecessor of the Job Training Partnership Act. Leagues paid particular attention to such issues as equitable service for women and minorities, the availability of supportive services and whether or not officials were adhering to the administrative and statutory requirements of the program. Local monitoring of CETA was effective in focusing citizen attention on CETA programs, but reforms in CETA were too late to prevent negative public reaction to the documented abuses cited by federal auditors. As a result of both negative publicity and a cutting back in public service employment programs, CETA was abolished and replaced in 1982 with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) as the nation's largest federal job training program. JTPA's mandate is to assist primarily low-income youth and low-income, unskilled adults in obtaining training for entry into the labor market.

Overall responsibility for administering JTPA lies with the states, with minimal federal oversight. Although JTPA retained some components of CETA, such as Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and Private Industry Councils (PICs), the functions of these components are drastically different. For example, under CETA, Private Industry Councils were used only in an advisory capacity, while under JTPA, PICs design the local programs. Under CETA, federal funds went directly to SDAs instead of to the states as in JTPA. Unlike CETA, which was seen as a public sector program, JTPA promotes a partnership between the public and private sectors. The goal of this partnership is to develop programs that can successfully meet the needs of both unskilled and economically disadvantaged workers.

Two years after its inception, JTPA was called a remarkable success by the Reagan Administration. JTPA's achievement is seen in its numbers: a $3.5 billion-a-year program -- less than half the funding level of CETA -- has trained 711,000 people, more than 90 percent of them disadvantaged, since October 1983. Nearly 70 percent of trainees have found jobs.

Yet, in spite of these impressive numbers, JTPA critics contend that it is neither reaching the hard-core unemployed nor providing for the special needs of women. Even supporters of JTPA acknowledge major concerns about insufficient funds to meet the needs of large numbers of the unemployed, the lack of policy direction from the federal government and an emphasis on cost and placement standards that moves many people through the system quickly but does not address the problems of the hard-core unemployed.

Critics maintain that the major shortcoming of JTPA is in the tendency of program officials to select participants who need only minimal training and who would probably find jobs on their own. Other serious problems with JTPA include the lack of funds for support services such as child care and transportation. Both of these are critical if women, particularly recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), are to participate.

The question of how women are benefitting under the Job Training Partnership Act has received very little attention and analysis. The League of Women Voters Education Fund, along with the Coalition on Women and Employment, is concerned with determining whether, and how successfully, JTPA is reaching and serving those subgroups of women in poverty.

As women attempt to enter the job market, they are confronted by some special problems, including the following:

1. Women are clustered in the workforce in the lowest-paying and most nontechnical occupations.
2. Women often face discriminatory attitudes by employers.
3. Women need adequate support services if they are to be sufficiently represented in job training programs.

Because women are the primary caretakers of children, continued joblessness and poverty for them translate not only into lost revenues and higher welfare costs for society, but also into the addditional economic and social cost of children raised in poverty. Therefore, a carefully planned job training program for women can result in benefits both for participants and for society.

JTPA: A Current Picture

Local Leagues of Women Voters have been monitoring JTPA programs in their communities since the program went into effect in 1982. The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) compiled information from selected Leagues, focusing on the implementation of JTPA as it relates to some of the particular problems confronting women.

The areas of greatest concern were:

- Are women adequately represented on PICs?
- Is money provided for support services?
- What types of services are provided?
- What is the starting salary of participants upon completion of the program?
- What was the percentage of women participating in the program?
- Are women placed in nontraditional jobs?
- What percentage of participants are AFDC recipients?

The information compiled provides a picture of how JTPA is serving 12 jurisdictions. The data is presented in the chart, with commentary following.

JTPA IMPLEMENTATION DATA FROM TWELVE LOCALITIES

League	# of women serving on PIC	Is money provided for support services?	% of total PIC budget	Types of services provided	% female participants	Hourly wage	Nontraditional jobs training	% AFDC recipients
CA/Pasadena	3/22	yes	n/a	child care, transportation, lunch	50	$4.90	yes	45
CT/New Britain-Bristol	4/25	no	n/a		70	$5.44	yes	60
GA/Macon	5/29	yes	11	child care, transportation, meals allowance	58	$4.30	yes	35
Hawaii	8/30	yes	n/a	child care, transportation	60	$5.36	yes	18
IL/Cook County	13/45	yes	10	child care transportation	55	$4.81-5.71	yes	53
Michigan	84/219	yes	3	child care, transportation, meals	46	$4.75	yes	31
New Hampshire	4/25	yes	11	day care, transportation, emergency	62	$5.13	yes	47
New York State	177/949	yes	15	child care, transportation	56	$5.00	yes	60
TX/Houston	7/41	yes	n/a	child care, transportation	55	$5.59	yes	20
VA/Charlottesville-Albermarle County	3/26	no	n/a	small amt. $ transp, day care for 4 months	65	$3.92	yes	34
WV/Charleston	5/23	yes	n/a	child care, transportation, lunches	47	$4.31	yes	40
WI/Greater Green Bay	5/18	no	n/a		46	$4.40-f 5.30-m	yes	29

n/a-not available

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Commentary on Chart

Female Representation on PICs

According to federal law, 51 percent of the representatives on PICs should come from private business and 45 percent should come from community-based organizations and other public interest groups. According to the data, female representation on PICs is critically low. It is important for women's concerns that representation from each segment include women and persons who understand women's job training needs.

One SDA official from Charlottesville commented that the low representation of women on the PIC was due to a policy of selecting only chief executive officers from various businesses and organizations to be members, and that the majority of chief executive officers were men. The Charlottesville official has recommended to the PIC that this practice be dropped and a full-scale campaign be launched to increase female representation on PICs.

Supportive Services

Nine of the 12 JTPA sites monitored provided money for support services. However, only one used the full 15 percent of the total budget that is permissible under the law. The types of services that were provided include child care, transportation and lunches. Those SDAs that did not appropriate money specifically for support services did provide some type of in-house referral to other agencies. Some SDAs provided money only for emergency situations.

Participation of Women

Overall, the female participation rate in JTPA programs is high, ranging from a low of 46 percent in Michigan to a high of 70 percent in New Britain-Bristol, Connecticut.

Hourly Wage

For the 12 states monitored, the average hourly wage for JTPA participants at placement was $5.30. However, wages did vary considerably, from a low of

$3.92 in Charlottesville to a high of $5.59 in Houston, Texas. Only Green Bay, Wisconsin, had data available on female wages at placement compared to male wages. In Green Bay, women earned $4.40 at placement compared to males who earned $5.30. In yearly terms these wages translate into below- and just-above-poverty incomes. In 1984 the poverty level for a family of four was calculated as a yearly income of $10,609. A job paying $3.92 an hour (as in the Charlottesville program) translates into a yearly income of only $8,153.60, an income that is well below poverty level for a family of four. An hourly wage of $4.40, such as Green Bay's, is still well below poverty for four with a yearly income of $9,156.40. Hourly wages of $5.30 (the program average) and above would take the family above the poverty level, at $11,024 annually, but still leave them in the ranks of the working poor.

Nontraditional Job Training

According to data gathered, many SDAs offer some training in nontraditional jobs. Yet, despite the offering of nontraditional training, few women are being placed in nontraditional jobs from JTPA training. However, in Macon, Georgia, women were trained and placed in jobs as carpenters, truck drivers, machine tool operators, aircraft assemblers and industrial and residential painters.

AFDC Recipients

Although the percentage of AFDC recipients among JTPA participants is relatively high in all jurisdictions, the level of wage that is paid at placement raises serious questions as to how JTPA recipients will fare on completion of the program.

Studies have shown that jobs that pay only the minimum wage ($3.35 per hour) plus the associated costs of working, i.e., transportation and child care -- actually yield less than AFDC allotments combined with food stamps, reduced housing and medical benefits. JTPA trainees who are the sole support of their families will have to earn wages that will make employment more beneficial to their families than continued reliance on AFDC and other support programs.

CONCLUSION

The data received from Leagues monitoring twelve JTPA sites indicates that problems exist in the delivery of services to women under JTPA. In spite of high female enrollments and the availability of some nontraditional training, women still are not moving into higher-paying nontraditional jobs.

In fact, women are denied training in some nontraditional careers because they are not certifiable or eligible for participation in JTPA under the Department of Labor standards. A stumbling block to certification of women in nontraditional jobs appears to be a requirement imposed by the JTPA plan that applicants be able to perform at the eighth-grade level. In many instances, this poses a barrier because most disadvantaged women perform at about the fifth or sixth-grade level. In addition, because little or no funds are provided for remedial education, the opportunities for disadvantaged and low-skilled women to participate in training for higher-paying jobs are greatly reduced.

Another serious problem in the implementation of JTPA is the lack of female representation on Private Industry Councils. Unfortunately, women comprise less than one-quarter of the PIC membership. Increased female representation on PICs is critical to assuring that the special needs of women are met. Without the influence and experience of women, policy decisions are being made that reduce the likelihood of successful outreach and participation by most disadvantaged women. PICs without female members will be less likely to provide for the types of training and support services that are geared to the special needs of women in poverty, such as remedial and communication skills training and child care.

A third problem that was documented is the lack of adequate money for support services. While federal regulations allow for 15 percent of the overall budget to be used for support services, only one of the SDAs that were monitored allocated this amount. The problem of SDAs not using funds to provide adequate support services was further documented by a study of 57 SDAs conducted by Grinker, Walker and Associates. The study found that 70 percent of the SDAs spent less than 10 percent of their funds on supportive services. In fact, most SDAs spent less than two-thirds of the 15 percent permitted.

The lack of support services seriously hampers the ability of many low-income and single parents to participate in the program. It further suggests that only participants with less serious problems and needs are selected for the program.

Another serious problem is the low level of wages at placement paid to JTPA trainees. This is particularly a dilemma for participants receiving AFDC and other support payments. Compared with low median earnings, AFDC cash benefits and noncash supplements can be more attractive, especially after payroll deductions (social security and federal and local taxes) are taken from wages. In 1984, the median AFDC cash benefit was $4,044 per household. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the median value of food stamps and school lunch benefits to be $1,440 per household and medical benefits to be about $1,000 and up per household. There are also various amounts for housing subsidies. Thus, since the median value of cash and noncash benefits to AFDC recipients is roughly $6,000 or more, low-paying jobs with no benefits are a clear disincentive for AFDC recipients.

In addition, in some jurisdictions, such as Cook County, Illinois, AFDC participation in JTPA is hampered by the mandatory workfare requirement, which mandates an AFDC recipient to work in a designated place for a specified number of hours before she can receive her allotment. In many instances, allowances are not made for persons desiring training. As a result many women are unable to even participate in the JTPA program, thereby denying them the opportunity to free themselves of welfare dependency.

Recommendations

Analysis of Leagues' monitoring efforts suggests that the following recommendations, if implemented, could improve JTPA's ability to meet the job training and job placement needs of women.

1. Promote affirmative action in the selection of PIC members.

   Governors could insist when issuing guidelines that the composition of a PIC reflect the ethnic, racial and gender diversity of the community that its JTPA program intends to serve.

2. Require that the number of women on PICs reflects the proportion of the female population within the Service Delivery Area.

This would ensure that local service delivery areas are represented fairly, in accordance with the first recommendation.

3. Provide program development for SDAs that actively promotes the training of women in more nontraditional, higher-paying jobs.

Nontraditional jobs are the key to higher wages and more self-sufficiency for families traditionaly tied to welfare programs. The Wisconsin governor's office established a Women's Council to study how Wisconsin women were faring under JTPA and funded a year-long technical assistance project targeted to improving the participation of women in nontraditional skills training. Such training should include remedial education where necessary. The Wisconsin actions could serve as a model for other state programs.

Another model could be the Pittsburgh program, where a JTPA contract was developed with the city's YWCA and a group called Adventure Concepts, a Washington, DC consulting firm, to promote small business entrepreneurship for women.

4. Require SDAs to use 15 percent of their budget for support services.

Governors' offices could take the lead in mandating that the allowable percentage of the entire JTPA budget be used to provide adequate supportive services to participants, thus encouraging more women to participate in the program who are now excluded due to the lack of needed services.

5. Develop policies that will encourage the coordination of a variety of support services with other human resources agencies.

Often there are a number of services that are provided by other agencies that could be made available to JTPA participants but are left untapped due to a lack of coordination and communication. Through the development of specific guidelines that spell out what services are available and how they can be obtained, SDAs could better serve JTPA participants.

Additional Resources

1. Cracking the Barriers of Poverty?: Monitoring the Impact of the Job Training Partnership Act on Wisconsin Women, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, 625 West Washington Avenue, Madison, WI, 53703-2691, $2.00.

2. Early Service Delivery Area Implementation of JTPA, State Level Implementation of JTPA and The Organization Title III of JTPA in Fifty States, Westat Inc., 1650 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.

3. The Federal Budget and Shrinking Resources for Job Training - Report #1, Illinois Unemployment and Job Training Research Project/University of Chicago, Department of Political Science, 5828 South University Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.

4. Civil Rights, The New Federalism and the Job Training Partnership Act - Report #2, Illinois Unemployment and Job Training Research Project/University of Chicago, Department of Political Science, 5828 South University Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.

5. William Grinker, Statement on Structural Unemployment, 1984, Grinker, Walker and Associates, 1500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036

6. Joblessness among Women: A Portrait of Female Unemployment - A First Friday Report, November 1, 1985, Coalition on Women and Employment and the Full Employment Action Council, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

7. Jobs Watch Alert, Center for National Policy Review, Suite 360, 1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

8. The JTPA Monitoring Guide, 1984, Children's Defense Fund, 122 C Street, N.W.. Washington, .D.C. 20001

9. The Job Training Partnership Act and Women: A Survey of Early Practices, MDC, Inc., P.O. Box 2226, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514 $15.00.

10. Michigan Survey Report on Supportive Services, Michigan Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Training, State Secondary Complex, Box 20015, Lansing, MI 48909.

11. Women and Work and Age: Policy Challenges, Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan, 300 North Ingalls Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

12. Working With Teen Parents, Family Resource Coalition, 230 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 625, Chicago, IL 60601 $9.00

13. Working Paper on Issues of Women and the Economy, National Governors Association Center for Policy Research, 444 North Capitol Street, Washington, D.C. 20002